

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 1, as follows:

~~TITLE OF THE INVENTION.~~

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 5, as follows:

~~BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION.~~

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 6, as follows:

Technical Field of the Invention.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 7, as follows:

The present exemplary embodiments of the invention relates to content programs distribution and returning system as well as content programs rental method. More specifically, the present exemplary embodiments of the invention relates to content programs distribution and returning system as well as content programs rental method that allows charging in accordance with usage time period.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 20, as follows:

In the conventional system of rental stores renting package media, it is necessary for a user to go out to the rental store to return the package. It is not

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always possible or convenient for the user to go to the rental store within the rental time period. Therefore, it is often the case that the user must pay an extended viewing fee at the time of return. Though the system is advantageous for the content programs provider as the extended viewing fee can be collected, the system is ~~inadvantageous~~ disadvantageous for users who must extend the rental period as when he/she cannot go to the store ~~from an~~ due to unavoidable circumstances.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 7, as follows:

Problems encountered in realizing the electronic content programs rental system includes “return of the rented content programs” and “charging of rental fee”. More specifically, in a method in which the computer arranged on the host station providing content programs monitors a user computer after the end of rental procedure and collecting rental fee in accordance with the usage time period of the user, ~~such an abuse cannot be prevented.~~ that This abuse includes not being able to prevent the time of usage of the content programs ~~is not from being~~ changed permanently from the date and time of renting, so as to ~~use~~ continuously permit continuous use, as clocks of the user computer can be changed by the user. This is ~~inadvantageous~~ disadvantageous for the content programs provider.

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Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 33, as follows:

When a user returns the package outside business hours, it is difficult to look for the content programs at the store and there is smaller chance of next rental of the package. For a user who is not well aware of his/her preference of content programs or a user who ~~feels~~ has difficulty ~~to search~~ searching for a content program of his/her preference among a wide variety of titles and ~~to select~~ selecting a desired content program, even the electronic content programs rental system does not encourage rental of the next content program.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 7, as follows:

~~SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION~~ OF NON-LIMITING EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 8, as follows:

~~An object of~~ One aspect of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is to provide a content programs distribution and returning system and content programs rental method that allows a user to return a rented content program at a nearest location at a convenient time, and allows charging of rental fees in accordance with the usage time period to the user.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 13, as follows:

~~Another object~~ Another aspect of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is to provide a content programs distribution and returning system and a content programs rental method that encourages a user who rented a content program to rent a content program of his/her preference next time.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 17, as follows:

According to an aspect, an exemplary embodiment of the present invention provides a content programs distributing and returning system, including: a first terminal executing rental of a content program; a second terminal that can be installed ~~space~~ spatially from the first terminal; and a management apparatus connected to the first and second terminals through a network. The first terminal executes rental of the content program by storing the content program in a prescribed memory, the second terminal executes a process for disabling reading of the content program stored in the prescribed memory; and the management apparatus determines charge amount for the rental of the content program based on a time period from storage of the content program by the first terminal in the prescribed memory until the second terminal executes the process for disabling reading of the content program in the prescribed memory, and controls the second terminal such that payment is made in accordance with the determined charge amount when the second terminal disables reading of the content program.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 32, as follows:

According to an aspect of exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it is possible for the user to return the content program at a second terminal positioned apart from the first terminal. Further, the charge amount of rental is determined by the management apparatus in accordance with the period from storage of the content program in a prescribed memory until reading of the content program from the prescribed memory is disabled.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 5, as follows:

Accordingly, it is possible for the user to easily return the content program, and therefore, it is easier to avoid payment of undesired extended viewing fee (fee charged in accordance with the time of delay from the return due date and time agreed at the time of rental). On the other hand, similar to the conventional system of package media rental stores, it is possible to read the content program up to the time of returning, provided that the extended viewing fee is paid at the time of return. Further, a charge amount for rental is determined by the management apparatus, using time points at which processes by the first and second apparatuses are performed as references. Therefore, it is needless to worry about ~~such an abuse~~ such as the ~~that~~ clock of the user side computer ~~has~~ having its setting changed in bad faith and the content program ~~is being~~ used for a long period of time.

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Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 17, as follows:

Preferably, in the content programs distribution and returning system of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, when executing the process for disabling reading of the stored content program in the prescribed memory, the second terminal stores information of recommended content programs to the prescribed memory.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 22, as follows:

Further, preferably, in the content programs distribution and returning system of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the first terminal displays an image allowing selection of a content program for rental, and stores a content program selected based on the image displayed for selection in the prescribed memory; and contents of the image allowing selection of a content program for rental is determined based on the information of recommended content programs stored in the prescribed memory.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 2, as follows:

In the content programs distribution and returning system of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, preferably, the first terminal stores the content program and a key necessary for reading the content program simultaneously in the prescribed memory; and the second terminal executes the

process for disabling reading of the content program stored in the prescribed memory by destroying the key.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 12, as follows:

Preferably, in the content programs distribution and returning system of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the management apparatus transmits a content program to the first terminal; and the first terminal stores the content program received from the management apparatus in the prescribed memory.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 17, as follows:

Further, in the content programs distribution and returning system of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, preferably, when executing the process for disabling reading of the content program stored in the prescribed memory, the second terminal executes a process for accepting rental reservation from a user, and transmits information of the accepted reservation to the management apparatus; and the management apparatus adds a reward point to the user whose rental reservation is accepted by the second terminal, for the rental reservation.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 29, as follows:

Further, in the content programs distribution and returning system of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, preferably, when executing the process for disabling reading of the content program, the second terminal accepts input of a rating by a user for the content program of which reading is to be disabled, and transmits the rating to the management apparatus; and the management apparatus adds a reward point to the user for the input of rating.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 3, as follows:

Thus, ratings for the content programs can be accumulated, and therefore it becomes possible to provide an assortment of titles that is more popular among the users.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 6, as follows:

According to another aspect, an exemplary embodiment of the present invention provides a content program distributing and returning system, including: a first terminal executing rental of a content program; a second terminal that can be installed apart from the first terminal; and a management apparatus connected to the first and second terminals through a network. The first terminal executes rental of the content program by storing the content program in a prescribed memory; and the second terminal executes a process for disabling reading of the content program stored in the prescribed memory, and stores information of

recommended content programs in the prescribed memory when executing the process.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 20, as follows:

Accordingly, it is possible for the user to return the content easily, and therefore, to avoid undesirable payment of an extended viewing fee (fee charged in accordance with the time of delay from the return due date and time agreed at the time of rental). Further, it is possible to encourage the user to rent further content programs.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 25, as follows:

According to a further aspect, an exemplary embodiment of the present invention provides a management apparatus connected to a first terminal executing rental of a content program and a second terminal that can be installed apart from the first terminal, through a network, in which the management apparatus determines charge amount for the rental of the content program based on a time period from storage of the content program by the first terminal in the prescribed memory until the second terminal executes the process for disabling reading of the content program in the prescribed memory, and controls the second terminal such that payment is made in accordance with the determined charge amount when the second terminal disables reading of said content program.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 3, as follows:

According to a still further aspect, an exemplary embodiment of the present invention provides a rental terminal executing rental of a content program, storing a content program in a prescribed memory, connected through a network to a returning terminal that disables reading of the content program in the prescribed memory, and further connected through a network to a management apparatus that determines a charge amount of the rental of the content program based on a period from storage of the content program in the prescribed memory by the rental terminal until the returning terminal executes the process for disabling reading of the content program in the prescribed memory, and controls the returning terminal such that payment is made in accordance with the charge amount determined when reading of the content program is disabled.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 15, as follows:

According to a still further aspect, an exemplary embodiment of the present invention provides a returning terminal that can be installed apart from a rental terminal, disabling reading of a content program in a prescribed memory stored by the rental terminal, connected through a network to the rental terminal, and further connected through a network to a management apparatus that determines a charge amount of the rental of the content program based on a period from storage of the content program in the prescribed memory by the rental terminal until the

returning terminal executes the process for disabling reading of the content program in the prescribed memory, and controls the returning terminal such that payment is made in accordance with the charge amount determined when reading of the content program is disabled.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 27, as follows:

According to a still further aspect, an exemplary embodiment of the present invention provides a content programs rental method including the steps of: storing a content program in a prescribed memory by a first terminal to execute rental of the content program; disabling reading of the content program stored in the prescribed memory by a second terminal that can be installed apart from the first terminal; determining a charge amount of the rental of the content program, by a management apparatus connected to the first and second terminals through a network, based on a period from storage of the content program in the prescribed memory by the first terminal until reading of the content program in the prescribed memory is disabled by the second terminal; and controlling the second terminal so that payment is made in accordance with the determined charge amount when the second terminal disables reading of the content program.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 7, as follows:

According to further aspects of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, it is possible for the user to return the content at a second terminal positioned apart from the first terminal. Further, a charge amount is determined by the management apparatus based on the time period from storage of the content in a prescribed memory until reading from the prescribed memory is disabled.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 13, as follows:

Accordingly, it is possible for the user to easily return the content program, and therefore, it is easier to avoid payment of an undesired extended viewing fee (fee charged in accordance with the time of delay from the return due date and time agreed at the time of rental). On the other hand, similar to the conventional system of package media rental stores, it is possible to read the content program up to the time of returning, provided that the extended viewing fee is paid at the time of return. Further, charge amount for rental is determined by the management apparatus, using time points at which processes by the first and second apparatuses are performed as references. Therefore, it is needless to worry about ~~such an abuse that~~ such as the clock of the user side computer has having its setting changed in bad faith and the content program ~~is being~~ used for a long period of time.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 25, as follows:

The foregoing and other objects, features, aspects and advantages of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 30, as follows:

Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram showing a configuration of content programs distribution and returning system which realizes the content programs rental method in accordance with an exemplary embodiment, ~~realizing the content programs rental method~~ of the present invention.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 5, as follows:

Fig. 4 is a functional block diagram showing a configuration of ~~an~~ electronic content programs distributing and returning center server.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 24, as follows:

DESCRIPTION OF ~~THE PREFERRED~~ NON-LIMITING EXEMPLARY
EMBODIMENTS.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 25, as follows:

~~Embodiment~~ An exemplary embodiment of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the figures in the following.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 27, as follows:

The system shown in Fig. 1 includes an electronic content programs distributing and returning center server 101 (content programs management center), rental store high speed recording apparatuses 120A to 120M (rental executing terminals), kiosk returning terminals {110A to 110P, 110Q (kiosk terminals), kiosk management servers (170A to 170K), a card 150 as a recording medium, and a portable viewing terminal (160). Distribution/supply of content programs is possible by communication network or insertion/removal of a card. Further, it is possible to confirm a list of titles that can be rented by a portable viewing terminal 160 through the Internet (165) from a rental introduction home page server 166.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 6, as follows:

The rental introduction home page server 166 shown in Fig. 1 is implemented by an Internet server that can store/transmit a common home page information, and it can display and supply recommendation information/rental list and the like transmitted from the electronic content programs distributing and returning center server 101.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 23, line 30, as follows:

At this time, it is possible for the electronic content programs distributing and returning server 101 to know from the information of the return electronic contents program, package ID related thereto, using Fig. 14, and to detect whether the user made a reservation of any related package media for rental. When a related object is reserved, a prescribed value is added to the rewards point accumulation of the user information. Thus, it is possible for the user to exchange a-prescribed points for rental fee discount of future rental of electronic content programs.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 24, line 5, as follows:

By selecting “rating” from a list of the portable viewing terminal 160 and inputting a numerical value through key input, it is possible for the user to enter a rating of the rented content program, which is stored in mark information storing unit 1105 of the card 150. At the time of returning the electronic content program at the kiosk returning terminal 110, the rating of the content program recorded on memory card (card 150) is transmitted together with the mark information, to electronic content programs distributing and returning center server 101 through the kiosk returning terminal 110. Upon reception of the information, the electronic content programs distributing and returning center server 101 adds a prescribed value to the reward points accumulation of user information. Thus, it

becomes possible for the user to exchange a prescribed points for rental fee discount of future rental of electronic content programs.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 28, line 25, as follows:

Therefore, exemplary embodiments of the present invention improves business efficiency of a rental store, and provides synergistic effect of correlation between the electronic content programs rental and the package media rental. As the rental of electronic content programs is promoted, customer turn over rate improves, enabling larger number of rentals, and users' preferences can be better reflected on the assortment of programs, which leads to higher interest.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 28, line 19, as follows:

Although exemplary embodiments of the present invention has been described and illustrated in detail, it is clearly understood that the same is by way of illustration and example only and is not to be taken by way of limitation, the spirit and scope of the present invention being limited only by the terms of the appended claims.